



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT INTERGOVERNMENTAL POLICY DIVISION

July 2, 2008

Members of the Continuing Legislative Committee on
State Planning and Development:

The Honorable Eric D. Coleman
The Honorable Art Feltman
The Honorable Jonathan A. Harris
The Honorable Leonard Fasano
The Honorable Craig A. Miner
The Honorable Joseph J. Crisco, Jr.
The Honorable Antonio (Tony) Guerrero
The Honorable Jack Malone
The Honorable Richard Roy

Dear Senators and Representatives:

In accordance with Section 16a-32(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes and Section 16a-32-5 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) hereby submits its Findings and Recommendations on the Town of Colchester application for an interim change to the *Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, 2005-2010 (C&D Plan)*.

Under State statutes, the Continuing Committee has thirty (30) days from receipt of OPM's recommendation to act on the proposed interim change application. My staff and I are available to meet with you at your convenience during this period, if you should have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "W. David LeVasseur".

W. David LeVasseur, Undersecretary
Intergovernmental Policy Division

Cc: Senator Eileen Daily, 33rd Senate District
Representative Linda A. Orange, 48th House District
Bill Hogan, DEP
Linda M. Hodge, First Selectman
Adam Turner, Town Planner
James Ford, Chairman Planning and Zoning Commission
James Butler, Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments

Findings and Recommendations

Town of Colchester

Request for an Interim Change to the Locational Guide Map Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, 2005-2010

In accordance with Section 16a-32(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes and Sections 16a-32-1-6 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the Town of Colchester requests an interim change to the Locational Guide Map of the State's Conservation and Development Policies Plan (C&D Plan).

The Town of Colchester requests that the State C&D Plan designation be changed for a number of parcels south of Lake Hayward Road bordered to the east by State Route 11 (near exit 6). These parcels are currently designated as Rural Lands, Conservation Area, Preservation Area, and Existing Preserved Open Space. In accordance with state regulations, the Town of Colchester was afforded the opportunity to request a joint public hearing with OPM and the Continuing Committee regarding this application. The Town opted to waive its right to a public hearing.

Background

The request relates to the Town's desire to attract campus style, business park development to this area and its need to service this area with public water and sewer facilities. Town officials have indicated that an existing manufacturing facility, that employs several hundred people, was interested in expanding and relocating to this area. The site's proximity and access to Route 11 is attractive to both the business and town officials since several trucks would be accessing the facility. The facility is currently located in a more residential area, thus re-locating the facility would reduce the truck traffic from the current area.

The requested change also relates to a larger effort by the town, which undertook a comprehensive re-zoning. As part of this effort, this area was targeted for such commercial and industrial growth. In other areas of the town, mixed-use zoning was employed to provide for more residential and retail activities. Further, the town has adopted an urban growth boundary, which serves to restrict the extension of urban infrastructure beyond that point in the future.

The current designation of this area consists of all four Conservation Policy Priorities on the Locational guide map: Existing Preserved Open Space (EPOS), Preservation Area, Conservation Area, and Rural Lands. The area designated as EPOS is actually surplus property owned by the Department of Transportation. OPM believes that this property in fact does not meet the definition of Preserved Open Space, as there is no permanent protection in place for this property such as a deed restriction. Based on discussions with Town officials, OPM is of the understanding that the town intends to acquire the property from the DOT.

The Rural Lands designation is due in large part to the undeveloped nature of the properties in addition to the fact that it was previously zoned as lower density residential land. Wetlands do exist throughout the various parcels, resulting in the Preservation area designation.

Recommendation

The location of this site, adjacent to Route 11 as well as the confluence of Route 2 and Route 11 would make a Growth Area designation consistent with the State C&D Plan, particularly Growth Management Principle 3: *Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options*. Additionally, the Growth Area designation would be consistent with the Municipal Plan of Conservation and Development as well as the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development for the Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments. The State C&D Plan's Growth Management Principle 6 seeks to achieve integration and consistency between state, regional, and local, planning efforts.

The Town of Colchester has designated this area, through zoning, as business park development. As part of this process, the designation of this area has been fully vetted through local public hearings prior to adoption. Further, the town has designated an urban growth boundary in an effort to prevent sprawl, and control the spread of urban infrastructure. It is after this comprehensive local planning effort, that the town has requested this change to the Locational Guide map, in an effort to achieve greater consistency with the State Plan.

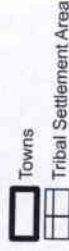
OPM recommends that the Continuing Committee **approve** the Town of Colchester's request for a Growth Area designation, unconditionally, for the area north of the of the state owned property, identified as "Area 1" of the attached map. With regard to the state owned property, identified as "Area 2" on the attached map, OPM recommends that the Committee **approve the change in designation to a Growth Area, contingent upon the transfer of the property from the DOT to the Town of Colchester**. OPM believes this action will allow the Town to proceed with its plans as well as provide the Town with greater control over the development of this property.

Town of Colchester



Recommended Changes Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2005-2010 Locational Guide Map

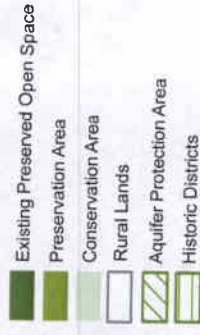
Legend



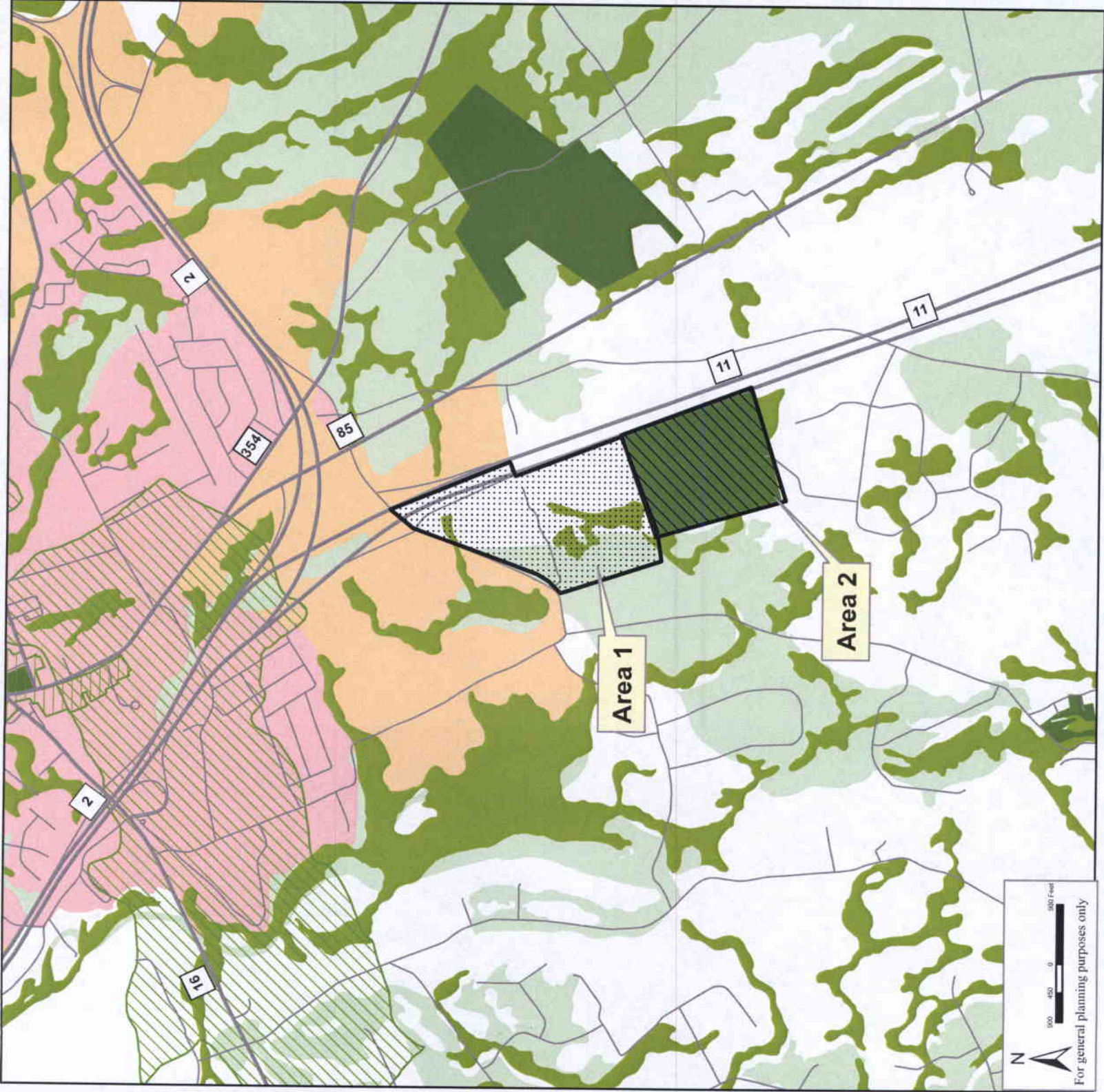
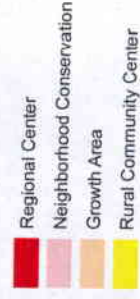
Streets



Conservation Policies



Development Policies



Area 1

Area 2



For general planning purposes only